

# Indiana House of Representatives

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## News and Information

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### **STATEHOUSE REPORT FROM REP. TRENT VAN HAAFTEN**

INDIANAPOLIS – Committee work continued to be the order of the day in the Indiana House this past week, as lawmakers moved toward the next set of major deadlines in this 2006 legislative session.

In my reports this year, I have emphasized the shortened calendar that is so much a part of a short session, and here is yet another indication. Last week, House committees began working on bills sent to our chamber from the Indiana Senate. By next Thursday (February 23), we must complete that committee work.

With most of the major bills this session currently in the Senate, we continue to keep an eye on what is happening in that chamber. It is still undetermined how the Senate will handle the governor's plan to lease the Indiana Toll Road for the next 75 years, however, the public outcry over this idea continues to grow.

One Senate committee already has halted a plan to move the ISTEP test from the fall to the spring, citing concerns expressed by House Democrats and Superintendent of Public Instruction Suellen Reed about the \$45 million price tag to make the switch.

As for the House's attention on Senate bills here are some of the highlights:

**EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION:** Senate Bill 283 would authorize a city, town or county to establish a "reverse 911" system to warn people by telephone in the event of weather emergencies like tornadoes, as well as utility outages, boil orders for drinking water contamination, evacuation notices, fires, floods, bomb threats and other disastrous situations.

**CHILD SERVICES:** SB 112 would move the First Steps program under the state's new Bureau of Child Services. First Steps is designed to give infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities access to early intervention services close to their homes.

**DISRUPTING FUNERALS:** SB 5 makes disorderly conduct a Class D Felony if it takes place within 500 feet of a funeral, burial or memorial service or visitation and disrupts those services. Violators could face up to three years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

**RESISTING LAW ENFORCEMENT:** SB 83 imposes a mandatory minimum sentence on any person who resists law enforcement by fleeing in a motor vehicle that causes bodily injury or death to someone else.

**JURY SERVICE:** SB 232 protects a person from losing a job, salary or benefits if called to jury duty. The bill also prohibits employers from requiring workers to use vacation or sick leave for jury service, and eliminates automatic exemptions from serving on a jury.

**LICENSE ISSUES:** SB 208 will enable a person with a specific medical condition to have that information included on his or her driver's license, learner's permit or identification. SB 269 will require the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to issue personalized license plates every year. SB 297 increases the penalties for people who knowingly provide false information when applying for a license, permit or ID card.

One item I would like to highlight this week is the "Posey County" flavor at the Statehouse this year. There are many opportunities for young adults in state government and I am proud to say we have two individuals working at the State House with Posey County roots.

Megan Giles, a New Harmony High School graduate, works as a legislative assistant to for me, Rep. Terri Austin and Rep. Scott Reske. Megan, the daughter of Tom and Jody Giles, graduated from Millikin University in 2004 with a degree in Political Science. She began her duties as a legislative assistant this session after serving an internship with the Indiana Democrat Party.

Megan helps in addressing constituent concerns and staying on top of the action here at the Statehouse. For me, Megan is a great benefit since she has first-hand knowledge of the issues and concerns of my district. So when you call or write to me, you are getting a double dose of Posey County help.

Brian Spaulding, a graduate of Mt. Vernon High School, is currently serving as an legislative intern for the House Republican caucus. Brian, the son of Mel and Kathy Spaulding, works with Reps. Bill Friend, Jim Buck, Tim Brown and Rich McClain. House internships are part-time positions which allow students first-hand experience in the work of the Legislature. Brian is currently a junior at Purdue University, where he is studying Political Science and serving as a manager of the Purdue men's basketball team.

Megan and Brian both exemplify the quality of citizens our families, communities and schools are producing. I hope the efforts of Megan and Brian encourage others to explore service to their communities, whether it be in state government or elsewhere. Personally, I take great pride in observing each of them making their mark here at the Statehouse. The parents of these two, as well as our entire community, also have much to be proud of.

If you need to contact me about anything taking place at the Legislature, you can call using the toll-free Statehouse telephone number of 1-800-382-9842, e-mail me through my Internet web site at [www.IN.gov/H76](http://www.IN.gov/H76) or write to me in care of the Indiana House of Representatives, 200 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46204.

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